

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 CIAE-00

COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 CAB-02

DOT-00 FAA-00 /043 W

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R 031246Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2816

INFO USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

DA WASHDC

SECDEF WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, IR

SUBJ: BELL HELICOPTER PILOTS' UNION

1. AT NOON ON AUGUST 2, BELL HELICOPTER PILOTS IN ISFAHAN STAGED "SICK OUT" TO DEMAND COMPANY RECOGNIZE EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION AS LOCAL 1001, PROFESSIONAL HELICOPTER PILOTS' ASSOCIATION. OF 90 SORTIES SCHEDULED TO BE FLOWN IN AFTERNOON ONLY 8 OR 9 WERE ACTUALLY PERFORMED. THOSE SORTIES WERE FLOWN BY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL OR NON-PARTICIPATING PILOTS. EMPLOYEE GROUP CLAIMS THAT IT HAS REPRESENTATION OF 96 PERCENT OF 178 BELL PILOTS. ABSENTEEISM CONTINUED MORNING AUGUST 3 WITH ONLY 15 OF 85 PILOTS REPORTING FOR WORK. ALL EMPLOYEES RETURNED TO WORK AFTERNOON AUGUST 3.

2. EMBASSY AND MAAG HAD NOTICE JULY 31 OF PILOTS' INTENTION TO STAGE PROTEST. WE CONSULTED WITH COMPANY AND EMPLOYEE LEADERS TO URGE NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO DISPUTE. WE HAVE MADE SPECIAL EFFORT TO AVOID ANY APPEARANCE OF FORMAL MEDIATION OR OTHER MIDDLEMAN ROLE WHICH COULD RESULT IN OUR BEING HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR OUTCOME OF DISPUTE. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT EMPLOYEES ARE ADAMANTLY DEMANDING RECOGNITION
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AND HAVE TALKED OF MORE DRASTIC MEASURES (STRIKE OR MASS RESIGNATIONS) SHOULD COMPANY FAIL TO GRANT RECOGNITION OR SHOULD IT TAKE ACTION AGAINST EMPLOYEE LEADERSHIP.

3. IN ADDITION TO RECOGNITION, EMPLOYEES HAVE LIST OF DEMANDS, INCLUDING BARGAINING RIGHTS, HIGHER PAY AND OTHER PERQUISITES. COMPANY RECOGNIZES VALIDITY OF SOME COMPLAINTS AND IS APPARENTLY NOT NOW READY TO RECOGNIZE UNION IN FORMAL SENSE. BELL AND EMPLOYEES WILL, WE UNDERSTAND, DISCUSS GRIEVANCES SOON BUT WITHOUT UNION RECOGNITION. COMPANY HAS WARNED EMPLOYEES THAT ANY FURTHER UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCES WILL RESULT IN DISMISSAL.

4. ABOUT ONE YEAR AGO, IN RESPONSE TO AN EMPLOYEE MOVE TO FORM A UNION, BELL OFFICIALS TOLD US THEIR LAWYERS HAD BEEN INFORMED BY NLRB THAT AMERICAN LABOR LAW HAD NO APPLICATION OVERSEAS. PILOTS' REPRESENTATIVES SAY THEY ARE SEEKING TO ESTABLISH NEW PRECEDENT. WE HAVE CHECKED INFORMALLY WITH GOI MINISTRY OF LABOR OFFICIALS RE APPLICABILITY OF IRANIAN LAW. WORKING LEVEL OFFICIAL, WHOM WE APPROACHED WITH HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION, APPEARED AT A LOSS AS TO HOW TO DEAL WITH THIS SORT OF SITUATION.

5. WE WOULD WELCOME GUIDANCE FROM WASHINGTON AS TO ANY INITIATIVE THAT WE SHOULD TAKE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO URGE MODERATION AND CONCILIATION ON BOTH SIDES, BUT DO NOT BELIEVE WE SHOULD TAKE POSITION OF PRESSING EITHER LABOR OR MANAGEMENT TO CHANGE THEIR POSITIONS BASED ON PRINCIPLE. PLEASE SEND US MATERIAL ON APPLICABILITY OF U.S. LABOR LAW IN SITUATION OF THIS KIND, IF DEPARTMENT THINKS SUCH INFORMATION SHOULD APPROPRIATELY BE GIVEN TO BOTH SIDES IN DISPUTE.
HELMS

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